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A LETTER FROM THE POPE, TO His DISTRESED SONS THE Catholicks In ENGLAND.

As it was Intercepted,
And now Publiſhed
by *S. V.*

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Catholicks

A Letetr from the POPE.

DEar Sons, whom now thy Engliſh Den of Hereticks deſpiſe, who now are by them made the *Ludibrium hominum*, who for all your cunning ſtratagems and heroick Plots and Treaſons, and all your learning, yet (to my ſorrow I ſpeak it) you are likely both now to be driven out from, baniſhed, and utterly diſregarded by theſe *Hgonots* (ſilly Souls:) yet I your old Father, before I take my leave of the World and of you, which if Hereticks ſtill purſue to ſpit out their Malice againſt you my Sons the *Jeſuits*, and if as is reported the Penal Laws be put in execution againſt you, will ſuddenly put a period to this my now uncomfortable life. Yet ſtill me thinks I ought not to deſpair, but wait to ſee our Halcyon days, and Hereticks be again brought under the rod of our holy Inquiſition. You know Sons how I have erected Seminaries, and to what end; which my enemies do call bad Conventicles, no better then Cockatrices to hatch treaſon: in theſe I never thought any Coſt too dear, whereby either to make your Bodies fit for travail, or to help your natures inclination with fallacious art for the accompliſhment of our purpoſe. And now my Sons 'tis high time that you fall from contemplation to practiſe, or elſe I ſay all is loſt: for Proteſtants give out that Popery has ſeen its beſt days in *England*; and I hear the Parliament, that Pope-marring Aſſembly, will drive you like Foxes into corners: nay, I am informed that Heretick-like they have publickly burnt the effigies of my Holineſs; and that D. S. a leading man among theſe Hereticks, hath charged us with, nay not only charged, but proved that Catholicks are Idolaters; and that they make no more of confuting Cardinal *Bellarmine*, then drinking of a glaſs of Wine. Ah now what is become of all our ſubtilty? we are now begirt about with our Father the Divils deviſes. Now therefore ſeeing it is thus, let none of you ſcorn your Old Fathers directions: for though your younger years be riper in Art, yet my experience

may teach you what in great designes is to be affected. *English* you are, whose *Albion-Cliffs* have heretofore seemed to my predecessors and me like Rocks of pure Diamond, where some have rightly loved us, and from the depth of their affection have embraced you my dearest Children: but the greatest part now pursue me with deadly hatred, terming me no better than a blood-sucking *Cannibal*, a Robber of Churches, a Patron of Heresies, a Father of Falsehood, the Broacher of Quarrells, the Seed-man of Sedition, the Infringer of Liberties, the Controler of Princes, the Enemy of Christ, the Monster and Astonishment of Nature, in Chayning Christians Souls in miserable Thraldom, and more then Egyptian servitude.

But we expect the time when these Clouds may, nay will vanish: be not discouraged; you know after a storm comes a calme, after Persecution liberty; the thoughts of which is unto me as it were a Restorative, to revive my faint and languishing Spirits: which hope doth chiefly depend upon your cunning in compassing; and cunning consisteth in this which followeth: First, that you work upon such as are fit to be added to our Catholick faction; and secondly, in the manner of the performance. Those that are the likelyest to be fitted to this frame, that is, to lend a hand when opportunity strikes allarme (I speak not sons of those who already are devout Catholicks, earnestly expect, and heartily pray for success in our Cause) either are Male-contents whom envy or malice may make desirous of a change; or loose professors, who have lent their love to voluptuous delights or prodigalities, Children whom extreme want hath made desperately minded; or wanton wanderers, whom long travail hath deprived of natural affection.

And thus began *Mahomet* to strengthen his State, by joyning himself with the angry Souldiers of *Heraclius*, stirring up their minds against the Emperor, and encouraging them in their defection; whereupon in process of time it came to pass, that although many could not abide him, from the baseness of his Birth, and odiousness of his former Life; yet growing from a Thief to a seditious Souldier, and from a seditious Souldier to be Captain of a Rebellious host, his Mahometical force began to subdue mighty people. Now as you must strike with *Mahomet* while the Iron is hot, and work those with diligence whose inclina-

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inclination you find pliable; so must your wisdom appear in the manner of this work, wherein I would have you to propound to your selves the deceitfulness of the damned wretch before named.

I would not for all the world it were known, my Sons, that you followed so base a pattern of a cozening Knave, for an example of imitation: this *Mahomet*, not only to gratifie his Companions, but also the more easily to allure all Nations, received all Religions; the pertinacy of *Arrius*, the error of *Nestorius*, the vain invention of the *Thalmudists*: therefore from the Jews he received Circumcision, from the Christians sundry washings as it were Baptism, and with *Sergius* denyed Christ his Divinity.

Secondly, to inlarge his Kingdom, he made such Laws as were fit to win and allure the vilest; as to his *Arabians*, base wretches, accustomed to live upon spoil, he alloweth Theft, and setteth a Law for revenge: hurt him which hurt you; he that killeth his enemy, or is is killed by him, entreth into Paradice: he permits of having many Wives, Divorcement for trifling causes; promiseth Paradice to them that give liberally, and fight for his sake.

Thirdly, mistrusting his fall, with many Bulworks hath he fenced his Law, that no way be open to subvert it; First, by commanding to kill them which speak against his *Alcoran*; Secondly, by forbidding men to confer with a contrary Sect; and thirdly, by prohibiting credit to be given to any of a contrary Religion.

Now Sirs, why should not we prevail as well as this deceiver, whom for example I have mentioned to you my Children? have not we as many Motives, as plausible Rhetoricians to perswade? for First, as he to allure all Nations received all Religions, so I your Old Father have found out such a Religion as is compounded of all sorts, that all might be pleased; and therefore our Enemies have called it the Cruse and Budget of heresies. Secondly, our Doctrines are as mighty to prevail, as ever were the Laws of *Mahomet*. If Old Men be covetous, their young men voluptuous, Nobles Ambitious, and the common sort Ceremonious; we have such allurements as are also to win them: to the rich covetousness, with Craft and Cruelty, and the rest of her factours,

factours, we have Coyned a Purgatory, the fire of our gain: to feed the voluptuous, our Religion admits ſimple Fornication, and our practiſe hath erected Stews: to draw on the Riotous, diſſolute and idle do-nothings, we have ordained many odd Holy-days; at *Rogation* to carry Banners, after *Pentecoſt* to go about with *Corpus Chriſti*, play, and other knick-naks: nay, to encourage you in Treaſon or deſperate undertakings, we have canonized *Garnet*, and other zealous Catholicks, who ſuffered Martyrdom for the Catholick Cauſe, after that heroick, and of all good Catholicks to be commended, though unfortunate Powder-Plot. To keep men from the ſight of their ſins, we have taught them to mince them, and that the firſt motions are no ſins unleſs they go with conſent, that ſome are venial, and need but an Aſperge of Holy Water, or a Biſhops bleſſing: to win ambitious hearts, that fain would be aloft, you muſt teach that my power is to give Kingdoms to ſuch as can conquer them, and to diſcharge Subjects from their Oaths of Allegiance and Loyalty, as our *Pius* the fifth and *Gregory* the thirteenth did againſt that Heretick (though to all the world and to us our ſelves known moſt Virtuous) Queen *Elizabeth*. Further, we give immortality to ſuch as can pluck the Crown from the Princes head; and tell you that (which is a moſt damnable lye, but no matter ſo long as the Catholick cauſe is advanced) to murder a Hugonot, or blow up at a blaſt an Heretical Parliament, are works meritorious.

If the people will know nothing, to fit their humours we teach that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*, That *Images are books for Lay-men*, That *knowledge of the Scriptures makes Hereſies*; and not as that Heretick Dr. *S.* teaches, that the Scripture ought to be the Rule of our Faith, but that it is ſufficient that their faith be folded up in our Church-belief, without underſtanding or knowing what it is. Again, to pleaſe the multitude, and to draw them to our Side, we have holy Reliques (Oh moſt pretious!) Diſpenſations, Indulgences, and thouſands of years of Pardon; and that Catholikes muſt believe not what Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, but what the Church believes, right or wrong; and that they ought to pin their Faith upon the fallible Infallibility of her, and not as Dr. *S.* affirms, upon (that heretical dangerous Book) the Scriptures, which have made Hereſies, as wiſely ſaid that Cardi-

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nal, when it was enquired how so many Hereſies came into the world: *Why*, ſays he, *we may thank our ſelves for it alone: for had we kept that dangerous Book the Bible in an unknown Tongue, theſe Hereſies had never ſprung ſo thick; but now every private and Lay-heretick puts his expoſition upon the Scriptures.* And was not this anſwered like himſelf, think you, my ſons? Yea certainly: for now we finde it, to our woful experience.

Laſtly, leſt ſimplicity either in Church-Service or Adminiſtration of Sacraments ſhould breed contempt, we have added many more petty matters to make them more commendable, more acceptable to the palat, and our followers more devout; as in our Churches gilded Images, Altars, Super-Altars, Candleſticks, and ſuch-like: In our Maſſings and Church-Service, Golden garments, coſtly Colours, ſtrange Geſtures, warbling and numbering of Beads, *&c.* In our Prieſts, ſquare Caps, Bald Crowns, great Hoods: In our Orders, Croſſing, Anointing, Shriving, forſwearing Wedlock, *&c.* In our Baptiſm, Waſhing of hands, Salting, Spawling, Exorciſing, Croſſing: In Receiving, to come with beards new ſhaven, and an imagination of a bodily and real preſence; which makes Catholikes devoutly to receive, when they are taught and really think it ſo, but in truth none is, but as the Hereticks own myſtically ſo to be. And laſtly, leſt this our jugling ſhould be eſpied, which I your old Father hear begins to be too manifeſt, we have made as ſtrong Fences for Papiſm, as ever did that wicked Beaſt for Mahometiſm. For firſt, we have endeavoured to bury the Scriptures, leſt by that light all our Projects, obſcure deſignes and darkneſs ſhould be diſcovered; which if ſudden care be not taken, I have reaſon to fear it will too too ſuddenly. Yet fear not, the Fowler is fain many times to follow his Game long before he can obtain it; the Angler is fain many times to ſit whole hours by the river-ſide, before he can perſwade the ſilly Fiſh to ſnap up their own deſtruction. We have waited long, and many of our well-deſign'd and heroick Plots (ſuch as was the Gun-powder-treaſon) have miſcarryed: but there may come a time when ——

Secondly, Church-ſervice we have thruſt upon ſilly people in a ſtrange language; Sons, you know well why: for *Simon Magus* was never detected, before Chriſt was preached in *Samaria*.

Thirdly, we have forbidden our followers to confer with the

Hugonots:

Hugonots: for they are always striking at us with the Scepter of the Word, and still cry, *To the Law and the Testimony*, &c.

Further, we tell you, that any thing, though the horridest Murder or Treason you should act, is highly meritorious, so that thereby the Catholike Cause may be respected, and the interest of our Church (I mean, that you may fill your own Coffers) advanced: and that as amongst the *Scythians* he was reputed the bravest Gentleman that spilt most bloud; so I tell you, he is Canonized for the worthiest Catholick, that can bring most souls to confusion.

And now, what can we do more? Yet what doth there else remain, but that you use all diligence, feeding your favourites with strong hope and large promises, standing at the Court-gates with *Absalom*, the lively image of Courtly Politicks, seeming to pity the peoples estate, when his ambitious humour did greedily aspire after his Fathers Kingdom. Even so you my Sons, tell them that their Religion is good, and how I your Father and theirs do pity them, and that if I had the disposition of the Crown, plenty should follow the Scepter, and peace should follow plenty. I say no more unto you, but walk closely, and keep your selves *in tenebris*: For your predecessors, I know not whether to ascribe it to angry Starrs, the influence of the Heavens, neglect of opportunity, want of secresie, by too great security, have had so bad success, that instead of supplanting a Kingdom, they have broke their Necks at Tyburn; and instead of reconciling Souls to the Romish faction, they have united their Heads to a Halter; this cruelty have they sustained for my sake, whom therefore I have Crowned with Martyrdom, and Question not but that they have as good rewards as they deserved. Thus hoping and expecting to hear the downfal of Hereticks, I am your tender (though by *Hugonots* despised) Father

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